

## Pregnancy

I am pregnant and concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic.

- For concerns about your birth, it's important for you to talk with your health care provider and the hospital or birthing center you have selected for birth. Different facilities have different policies based on their current situation.
- The World Health Organization has a good [FAQ on pregnancy and breastfeeding](#) that addresses concerns about people who are pregnant and may have COVID-19. The [CDC website](#) has more information on many of the questions listed below.

How many people can be present in the room during my birth?

- The CDC has advised hospitals to limit the number of people allowed in hospitals, including visitors and non-essential staff to reduce exposure of patients and health care workers, to COVID-19. During labor, hospitals have generally made exceptions to allow a support person as long as they are not experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Talk to your facility or health care provider about the policies where you are going to deliver your baby and if the facility is allowing any exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Decide in advance who your primary support person would be and identify a secondary person who can be available if your primary support person is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. You can also make plans with your provider about connecting with additional support people through platforms such as FaceTime, Google Hangouts, or Zoom.

Am I at higher risk of COVID-19 if I'm pregnant?

- While pregnant people are at no higher risk for contracting COVID-19, they are at higher risk of severe complications from COVID-19 if they do become infected. If you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19 you should contact your health care provider. See the [CDC website](#) for more information.

How will I receive prenatal care if I cannot go into the office/clinic for appointments?

- Health care providers and facilities have changed office visits to limit the number of people coming into the office. Some health care providers are doing visits through telephone or video calls. It is important that you continue to receive care throughout your pregnancy. Ask your health care provider how you will continue your appointments throughout your pregnancy, even if you are not going to appointments in-person.

### **If I'm pregnant and contract COVID-19, will my baby get COVID-19?**

- Based on current research, it appears unlikely that pregnant people will transmit COVID-19 to their baby before or during birth. COVID-19 has not been detected in amniotic fluid, breastmilk, or other maternal samples. However, after birth a newborn can contract COVID-19 from the birth parent or other people. See the [CDC website](#) for more information.

### **If I have COVID-19 at the time of my birth, will my baby be able to stay with me?**

- Hospitals are taking precautions when caring for people who have tested positive or are suspected of having COVID-19 at the time of their birth to prevent spreading the infection to the baby. The choice of whether to have your baby in your hospital room with you should be made by you and your health care team. Your providers will talk with you about a plan to protect your baby from getting COVID-19 that may include hand washing, wearing a mask, and physically distancing yourself from your baby. You have a right to actively participate in the conversation with your health care provider in your preferred language and ultimately decide how to care for your baby. See the [CDC website](#) for more information.

### **Is it safe to go to a hospital that is taking care of people with COVID-19?**

- The labor and birth units in hospitals around the state are functioning normally during the pandemic with hospital beds reserved specifically for labor and birth. Hospitals are treating people with COVID-19 in separate areas of the hospital and are taking precautions with all staff, patients and support people to limit exposure. Labor and birth units are taking special precautions to care for people in labor with COVID-19 separately from laboring people without COVID-19.

### **What can I do if I am worried about my emotional health during this pandemic?**

- Pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period can be an emotionally difficult time under the best of circumstances. Having a baby during the current pandemic can heighten normal worries and concerns for the safety of you and your baby. If you or someone you are close to is experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety, it is important to ask for help. For additional support and resources in Colorado go to [www.postpartum.net/colorado](http://www.postpartum.net/colorado) or [www.postpartum.net/ayuda](http://www.postpartum.net/ayuda) (for Spanish) or reach out to your health care provider. There are a number of virtual services available to help support you through this time. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 911. For additional safety information, contact the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or Colorado Crisis Services at 1-844-493-8255.

## **Breastfeeding**

For additional breastfeeding guidance, visit the [CDC's Pregnancy and Breastfeeding website](#).

### **Is it safe to breastfeed my baby if I have or think I may have COVID-19?**

- In the limited studies available, COVID-19 has not been found in breast milk. However, your baby could get the virus from contact with you or other caregivers. The CDC recommends breastfeeding or feeding expressed breast milk to your baby while taking precautions to avoid spreading the virus to your baby. Breast milk protects babies from getting sick and is the best source of nutrition for most babies. Breastfeeding helps strengthen your baby's immune system because breast milk contains antibodies and other important components.

- If you are sick or experiencing symptoms, you should take all possible precautions to protect your baby, including washing your hands before and wearing a facemask when you touch your baby. You may breastfeed directly at the breast or express breast milk for a healthy caregiver to feed to your baby.

#### **Can COVID-19 be given to my baby through breast milk?**

- The limited studies on breastfeeding women with COVID-19 have not found the virus in breast milk. The main concern is the parent or caregiver infecting the baby through respiratory droplets. Precautions should be taken to keep your baby healthy, including washing hands before touching and feeding your baby and wearing a face mask if you are experiencing symptoms or confirmed positive with COVID-19.

#### **What precautions should I take to breastfeed my baby directly at the breast?**

- As always, before touching your baby you should wash your hands. If you have tested positive or suspect you have COVID-19, wear a face mask and wash your hands before each feeding.

#### **What precautions should I take to feed my baby expressed breast milk?**

- If you are sick or choose to express breast milk to feed your baby, you can do so with hand expression or a breast pump (manual or electric). Be sure to use proper hand washing before touching any pump or bottle parts and before expressing breast milk. Follow [recommendations for proper pump cleaning](#) after each use and thoroughly clean all parts that come into contact with breast milk. Clean the pump after each pumping session according to the pump manufacturer's instructions.
- If possible, or if you are too sick to feed your baby, have another healthy person feed your expressed milk to your baby. Be sure everyone feeding your baby follows proper hand hygiene and wears a face mask if experiencing symptoms. To establish and keep your milk supply, it is important to express your milk from the breast as often as your baby eats every day, typically 8-12 times a day for newborns or every 1.5 to 3 hours.

#### **If I am separated from my baby after birth due to COVID-19, can I breastfeed?**

- If you are temporarily separated from your baby after birth because you are sick with COVID-19 and you intend to breastfeed, you should request lactation support from your hospital and an electric breast pump to help you establish and maintain your milk supply. Expressed breast milk should be fed to your baby by a healthy caregiver. Breast milk protects babies from getting sick and helps strengthen your baby's immune system.

#### **Do I need to clean breast milk storage containers (bottles, bags, etc.)?**

- The CDC does not recommend disinfecting breast milk containers after pumping or before feeding a baby. It is unnecessary and unsafe to apply chemical disinfectants to milk storage containers. If a hospital is concerned, follow guidance from the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) and use a simple [Bottle Transfer Technique](#).

#### **What if I need help with breastfeeding?**

- Seek help with breastfeeding, counseling or psychological support, or practical feeding support from appropriately trained health care professionals, lactation consultants, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program staff, La Leche League, and community-based peer breastfeeding counselors. You can find breastfeeding support resources, including virtual support groups and counseling sessions,

through the hospital where you delivered or any nearby hospital with maternity services (you did not have to deliver at a hospital to get lactation support there). For online breastfeeding resources, visit [BreastfeedColorado.com](https://www.breastfeedcolorado.com) or the [Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition](https://www.coloradobreastfeedingcoalition.org).

**If I am separated from my baby and need a breast pump, how can I find one?**

- Breast pumps can be very useful tools to help establish and increase your milk supply and are often a necessity if you are separated from your baby, whether due to illness like COVID-19 or due to work or school. Breast pumps are a required device as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Ask your health insurance provider to determine what pumps are available and how to receive them. If you are on Medicaid or uninsured, you may be able join the [Colorado Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\)](https://www.coloradowomeninfantsandchildren.org) program to receive a breast pump and related breastfeeding support, including peer counselors, access to expert lactation support, as well as nutritious food and more - [sign up to be contacted by WIC](#) or visit [ColoradoWIC.com](https://www.coloradowic.com).

**Related helpful links:**

- [Determining the type of pump you may need.](#)
- [Guidance on pumping and storing breast milk.](#)
- CDC - [How to Keep your Breast Pump Kit Clean.](#)
- [CDPHE breastfeeding and pumping resources.](#)